

PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD ORIENTATION

A Checklist

The appointment of a new board member or members offers an ideal opportunity to hold an orientation. All board members can use the review of their functions, the library's current condition, and anticipated programs and shortfalls. Orientation should be planned for all board members and the information kept up to date. The chairperson of the board and the library director are usually jointly responsible for orientation. The following outlines one library director's preparation for such an orientation:

Before the meeting

- Prepare a personal profile for each member
 - Name
 - Home address, telephone number, fax, and e-mail
 - Preferred mailing address
 - Specific skills or experience to share as a board member
 - List of things to help the library accomplish as a board member
 - Educational background
 - Current occupation
 - Office address, telephone number, fax, and e-mail
 - Community and professional associations or boards on which he/she serves or has served
 - Library board committees on which board member would like to serve (list options)
- Prepare a packet of materials for board member

Agenda for the meeting

- Welcome and introductions
- Distribute materials
- Mission and legal charge of the library
- Library history
 - Structure
- Legal duties and responsibilities (include copies of, or referral to, state and local laws governing public libraries and public boards).
- Relationship with county government

- Bylaws review
 - Schedule of meetings
 - Quorum
 - Absences
 - Agenda
 - Committees
 - Etc.
- Board rights and ethics (see attached Ethics Statement for Public Library Trustees)
- Advocacy
- Policies
 - Purpose
 - Policy manuals (Personnel, Financial, Services)
- Library Program
 - Annual report
 - Long-range plan
 - Director's report
 - Statistical report
 - Financial report (list of key budget terms and definitions, sources of income, current annual budget and/or appropriation documents, financial calendar)
- Special services
- Budget
 - Process
 - Sources of revenue
 - Areas of expenditures
 - Problems confronting library
- Library trust or foundation
- Library staff
 - Organization chart and list of key personnel
 - Relationship with the library director
 - Relationship of board members with other staff
 - Volunteers

- Friends of the Library
 - Local
 - State
- Training and continuing education:
 - List of professional library organizations with trustee sections (ALA - ALTA, SELA, SCLA)
 - Calendar of upcoming training opportunities
 - Reading list and supplementary materials
- Annual self-evaluation of board meetings
- Resources for more information:
 - South Carolina State Library Newsletter and mailings
 - Books, periodicals, audio-visual materials available through Interlibrary Loan

ETHICS STATEMENT FOR PUBLIC LIBRARY TRUSTEES

Trustees in the capacity of trust upon them, shall observe ethical standards with absolute truth, integrity, and honor.

Trustees must avoid situations in which personal interests might be served or financial benefits gained at the expense of library users, colleagues, or the situation.

It is incumbent upon any trustee to disqualify himself/herself immediately whenever the appearance of a conflict of interest exists.

Trustees must distinguish clearly in their actions and statements between their personal philosophies and attitudes and those of the institution, acknowledging the formal position of the board even if they personally disagree.

A trustee must respect the confidential nature of library business while being aware of an din compliance with applicable laws governing freedom of information.

Trustees must be prepared to support to the fullest the efforts of librarians in resisting censorship of library materials by groups or individuals.

Trustees who accept library board responsibilities are expected to perform all of the functions of library trustees.

Adopted by the Board of Directors of the American Library Trustee Association, July 1985; Adopted by the Board of Directors of the Public Library Association, July 1985; Amended by the Board of Directors of the American Library Trustee Association, July 1988; Approval of the amendment by the Board of Directors of the Public Library Association, January 1989.